

## Andrew Jackson to John Christmas McLemore, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### TO JOHN C. MCLEMORE.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> N. Y. Hist. Soc. John C. McLemore married a niece of Mrs. Jackson. He was one of Jackson's most devoted friends in Nashville.

Washington, April, 1829.

*Dear Sir:* Major Donelson has read me part of your letter Just received. I have also recd. one from my old friend Judge Overton, which I will answer so soon as a leisure moment occurs. I am much engaged. A *rat* that has been marauding on the Treasury, finding that he was detected, left this place, and I am engaged preparing legal process to pursue and arrest him. It may be that the Late Secy. of the Navy is concerned in the frauds. The presumption is *strong*, still, he may be able to explain. This for yourself, and your confidential friends. a few days will give publicity to this transaction, but all must be still until the principal is arrested, and until the Ex Secy of the Navy explains, for which I have directed a call to be made upon him in writing, which is done, and I presume he will forthwith answer. should he hesitate he will be called on by a Judicial inquiry, and be put upon his defence. Should a Jury find him guilty, the punishment a Penitentiary offence. as to the Guilt of *Tobias Watkins* <sup>2</sup> in this fraud upon the Treasury, there can be no doubt, but he has disappeared.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Tobias Watkins was fourth auditor of the Treasury from 1824 to 1829. Jackson appointed Amos Kendall in his place. See J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, VIII. 141, 290.

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I beg my friends in Tennessee to have no fear. I will go on in the same even tenor of my ways in harmony with my Cabinet, (which is one of the strongest, as I believe, that ever have been in the United States) cleansing the Augean Stable. My Cabinet is gaining upon the popularity of the nation daily, and my deceitful enemies in Tennessee will fall in to utter disgrace and contempt, not in Tennessee alone, but in the whole Union. I am aware of the base conduct of some of our Tennessee friends towards Eaton. I heard some of the most unfounded lies ever propagated, that must have been circulated by some Members of Congress, be them, whom they may, if Eaton can trace it to a source worthy of notice, they will feel the chastisement that such base conduct and secret slander merits. he has already paid his respects to two gentlemen *here*, for the tales of their wives; and I suppose their tongues will be hereafter sealed. I have heard, that it has been circulated in Tennessee, that Timberlake<sup>3</sup> cut his throat on account of his jealousy of Eaton. There never was a *baser lie told*. To the last moment of his life, he had every confidence in Eaton, and in November 1826, sent him a full power of Attorney to attend to all his business, by which Major Eaton has saved from the rack of his fortune, about \$25,000, which he has willed to his wife and children. Read the two letters inclosed. They are from two Gentlemen that were with him, on the whole cruise, intimate friends of his and who closed his eyes in death, and then recollect, that Timberlake was a mason, Major Eaton, a mason, and Majr. Oneal, the Father, a mason and must he not be a Villain, who could ascribe to Majr. Eaton, such base conduct, and violation of every virtuous obligation; I would inclose you a copy of the letter of Attorney, but time will not permit. I have had it in my possession, it is authenticated in due form, at Giberalter.

3 Mrs. Eaton's first husband, a purser in the navy.

I have long ago intended to do something for Genl Carroll. I will give him a charge de affairs to South America, if he will accept it, so soon as one is open. It is all that can be done for him, as we are trying to curtail our Diplomatic Corps, at least of Ministers of the first Grade, and our predecessors has left us without funds.

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I fear nothing that Clay or such treacherous friends as *Miller* and others can do. These are the men who cry out principle, but who are on the scent of Treasury pap. And if I had a *tit* for every one of these *pigs* to suck at, they would still be my friends. They view the appointment of Eaton as a bar to them from office, and have tried here, with all the tools of Clay helping them on, to alarm and prevent me from appointing him. I was elected by the free voice of the people, I was making a Cabinet to aid me in the administration of the Government, agreeable to their will, Majr. Eaton was necessary to me to fulfill the expressed will of the people, he was *my friend*, I knew his *worth*, and like Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, I took him from my own state. I was not making a Cabinet for Genl Desha, Isaacs, Mitchel and Miller, I was making a Cabinet for myself. As I told them, I did not come here to make a cabinet for the Ladies of this place, but for the nation, and that I believed, and so I do, that Mrs. Eaton is as chaste as those who attempt to slander her. Assure my friends we are getting on here *well*, we labour night and day, and will continue to do so, until we destroy all the rats, who have been plundering the Treasury. I am not in good health, but as long as I am able, I will labour to fulfill the expectations of the nation. The press *here* for offices exceeds everything known before, and it seems that almost every man that voted for me, lays in his claims for some office or other. not having time to say more at present, remember me affectionately to your Lady, and the dear Little ones, to all friends, and accept of my wishes for your future welfare and prosperity.

I remain your sincere friend,

I have this moment heard a rumor of poor Houstons disgrace. My God, is the man *mad* 4

4 Refers to Sam Houston, whose friends were shocked by his unexplained separation from his bride of a few months, his resignation of the governorship of Tennessee, and his withdrawal from white society to live with the Southwestern Indians. See p. 23n., *post*.

P. S. Say to my friend Earle I have recd. his letter and will answer it soon.